

**PARM
LOCAL
WORKING
GROUP**

Date: April 21, 2005

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: Sun Bowl Café, Bicknell, Utah

Members Present;

Sarah Lupis (USU Extension)

Verl Bagley (USU Extension)

Terry Messmer (USU Extension)

Dave Dahlgren (USU)

Joanne Stenten (USFS)

Joe Delabrué (USFS)

Ron Torgerson (SITLA)

Kevin Dustin (WS)

Teresa Bonzo (UDWR)

Andy Taft (Landowner)

John Keeler (UFB)

**Planning/update
meeting**

Information Presented

Lek Counts: Today's count resulted in 616 males (average 44 males per lek). This is not the high count for the season, just today's count. Today's count would put the UDWR population estimate at 2310 birds. Thanks to everyone who participated in today's count.

MOU: Group reviewed MOU. Joanne gave comments on USFS signature page.

Trapping Update: Parker project—20 out of 70 hens have been radio-collared. Still have many to go. BYU have helped with the trapping effort. They will be transplanting 35 birds to Strawberry Valley. Dave is VERY interested in having help. Trapping generally lasts from 9 PM to 4 AM. Dave is trying to trap more hens because he is looking at brood survival. He will catch chicks just as they come off the nest to see what happens to them. Hopefully, once the chicks reach a larger size, Dave will go back and collar those individuals. This should lessen the capture effort needed during spring.

Conservation Plan: Group reviewed Chapter 1 of the Conservation Plan. Several new potential cooperators were added to the list. Sarah discussed how the Group will now try to write the Conservation Plan starting with Chapter 1, rather than with the issues identification section (Chapter 3). The Group agreed that it was important to go through the information sharing process.

Aspen Research: Proposals for aspen treatment was presented to the Group back in November. A USU graduate student will be using fencing to look at aspen regeneration. Some stands will

be treated (clearcut, partial cut) in an experimental fashion to see how those stands respond. There is some indication that livestock and wildlife may be preventing regeneration of aspen stands. Fencing will be used to exclude browsers (fencing will not exclude sage-grouse). Study aims to evaluate the use of treatments and fencing on enhancing aspen regeneration and in the use of various management options.

Prairie Dog: Dwayne Elmore will be looking at the effect of grazing on prairie dogs. His project will look at the effect of brush treatments on prairie dog dispersal. The treatments may also help enhance habitat for sage-grouse (brood rearing habitat) and livestock (forage production) by increasing the grass/forb component. Treatments will be several acres large (~5 acres). Dwayne has selected 6-8 treatment sites that will be subjected to a random treatment assignment. Surveys have been done to determine that there are no prairie dogs there now. This way, he can re-survey to see if prairie dogs come into those areas after the treatments have been implemented.

Predator Management: different from most other areas in the state. Typically, livestock are only in an area for part of the year (3-6 months). WS typically does coyote control on those areas before and while livestock are out. On the Parker, livestock is out all year and WS is working all year to control predator populations. About 150 coyotes are removed every year. Kevin feels that a high percentage of coyotes are removed as they move through the area. However, it would be hard to compare to other areas because the management is so different. Their primary obligation is to control predators for ranchers; benefits to pronghorn and sage-grouse are secondary. Raven control is also conducted on Parker. Kevin doesn't know how successful the raven control is; however, he does feel that nest predation would likely go up without it. The work WS does on Parker hasn't changed much in the past several years. Kevin feels that the Parker is unique also because the coyotes here travel more than in other places (except in denning season). Every year, one or two red fox are removed from the Parker; they are generally not found at such high elevation. Kevin put out eggs for ravens last week and this morning and will continue through the nesting season.

WHIP Project: Ron met with grazers. Talked about flying spike on some pastures (~6,000 acres) this summer/fall and then rest until the very end of the season. Seed that area afterwards. SITLA agreed to provide the match for the spike. With that match they could do a larger area. Dave commented that the soils are shallower in some areas and he and Ron discussed what active ingredient to use for an effective treatment. Dave suggested that the Parker Lake Pasture, for sage-grouse, would be a good model because that is where hens are going with broods. Tom will do some soil testing to help determine the appropriate concentration for the spike treatments. Dave suggested using a patch application if a higher concentration is used.

Prairie Dog Bank: SITLA is working on a prairie dog mitigation bank. They have added 230 acres in the Tanks, 276 acres for Dwayne's research areas, and about 230 acres in the Flossy Creek. If the agreement is written and agreed with the USFWS then SITLA can sell prairie dog mitigation credits. They are working on a perpetual fund of \$4000 for mitigation efforts. Prairie dog counting will be done **May 23rd**. They hope to do the entire area.

NRCS Workshop: NRCS national biology staff, SCD, etc. will meet on the Parker on July 19-20, 2005 for an all day workshop and field trip. They will look at the bank area, treatment sites, the prairie dog site, etc. to see how the projects on Parker are being managed.

Discussion Highlights

Terry discussed the NRCS initiative to document the effects of rangeland vegetation treatments on sage-grouse and other sensitive species on private lands. There are projects going on in Tooele/Ibapah and west Box Elder.

Andy Taft suggested having H.S. students help with trapping. He suggested contacting the principal, Dr. Charlie Nelson.

Pronghorn antelope management plan—would like to know if pronghorn are being looked at as part of Dwayne's grazing study. Dave's study has shown that rabbits are taking some of the forage. Terry was not sure about pronghorn.

Actions Taken

PARM 2005 Annual Reports were distributed.

The non-discrimination was signed by Andy Taft.

NEXT MEETING: June 9th, 2005 at 10:00AM in the County Extension Office.

Follow-up Needed

Sarah and Todd to reformat MOU and send out with minutes. The Group set a goal to finalize the MOU at next meeting.

Sarah and Todd to send out Chapter 1 with meeting minutes.

Group to comment on that Chapter 1.

ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE: May 25th

Sarah and Todd to contact new potential cooperators and extend invitations to participate.

Dwayne and Ron to communicate about exact prairie dog "pathways" for archeologist clearance. Dwayne has a digital map that he will email to Ron.

Terry to send a tentative agenda of the NRCS workshop to Verl.

Todd and Sarah to bring GIS to next meeting and revisit PARM boundary and subunits.